Conference on Disarmament

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Note verbale dated 27 March 2014 from the Permanent Mission of Mexico addressed to the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament transmitting the Chair's Summary of the Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, Mexico, on 13 and 14 February 2014

The Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations Office and other international organizations based in Geneva presents its compliments to the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Office of the Acting Director-General and Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and has the honour to refer to the 2014 Session of the Conference on Disarmament.

In this respect, the Permanent Mission of Mexico transmits herewith the Chair's Summary of the Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which took place in Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, Mexico, on 13 and 14 February 2014, and kindly requests that this document be registered as an official document of the 2014 Session of the Conference on Disarmament.

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Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons

Chair's Summary

Delegations representing 146 States, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and civil society organizations, participated in the Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Nayarit, Mexico, on 13 and 14 February 2014, to discuss global and long-term consequences of any nuclear detonation, accidental or deliberate, from the perspective and concerns of the twenty-first century society, including areas such as public health, humanitarian assistance, the economy, development and environmental issues, climate change, food security and risk management, amongst others.

From the Chair's view, the broad and active participation of States and civil society reflects the global concern regarding the effects of nuclear weapons, as well as the increasing recognition that this is an issue of the utmost importance to all peoples in the world.

The Nayarit Conference expresses its gratitude for the participation of the victims and survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks, as well as for the references made to the victims of nuclear tests.

The Nayarit Conference succeeded in presenting a facts-based approach to facilitate an informed discussion of these effects. Some key conclusions can be extracted from the presentations and discussion:

- The effects of a nuclear weapon detonation are not constrained by national borders – it is therefore an issue of deep concern shared by all.
- Beyond the immediate death and destruction caused by a detonation, socio-economic development will be hampered and the environment will be damaged. Suffering will be widespread, the poor and vulnerable being the most severely affected.
- Reconstruction of infrastructure and regeneration of economic activities, trade, communications, health facilities, and schools would take several decades, causing profound social and political harm.
- Radiation exposure could result in short and long-term negative effects in every organ of the human body and would increase cancer risks and future hereditary pathologies.
- Today the risk of nuclear weapons use is growing globally as a consequence of proliferation, the vulnerability of nuclear command and control networks to cyber-attacks and to human error, and potential access to nuclear weapons by non-state actors, in particular terrorist groups.
- As more countries deploy more nuclear weapons on higher levels of combat readiness, the risks of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional use of these weapons grow significantly.
- It is a fact that no State or international organization has the capacity to address or provide the short and long term humanitarian assistance and protection needed in

case of a nuclear weapon explosion. Moreover, it would not be possible to establish such capacities, even if attempted.

As the Nayarit Conference is a follow-up of the First Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons (Oslo, March 2013), these conclusions build upon those reached in Oslo.

The wide range of damage and negative impact in the likelihood of a nuclear explosion, as well as the vast resources allocated to maintain and modernize nuclear arsenals, make the mere existence of these weapons absurd, question the arguments in their defense and ultimately are contrary to human dignity.

It is the Chair's perception that awareness of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons is already changing the hearts and minds worldwide of those engaging in discussions concerning nuclear weapons.

Actions such as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty as a core element of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and the achievement of a comprehensive outcome in the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, together with the discussions on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, are mutually reinforcing processes.

When it comes to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, no efforts are small. In this regard, many delegations underscored the positive impulse provided by the United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on Disarmament held in 2013.

The Chair expresses its deep gratitude to civil society and its involvement and inputs to the Nayarit Conference, and calls on all governments to forge new and renewed multisectoral partnerships with civil society to work towards mutually beneficial objectives.

The Chair warmly welcomes the Austrian offer to host the Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. This offer has been received with great support from participants as a follow-up to Oslo and Nayarit, to deepen the momentum, anchor these conclusions and take them forward. As it was expressed by many delegations, the Conference reiterates the invitation to nuclear weapon States and States non-parties to the NPT to participate in the Third Conference, in Austria.

In doing so, we need to take into account that, in the past, weapons have been eliminated after they have been outlawed. We believe this is the path to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

In our view, this is consistent with our obligations under international law, including those derived from the NPT as well as from Common Article 1 to the Geneva Conventions.

The broad-based and comprehensive discussions on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons should lead to the commitment of States and civil society to reach new international standards and norms, through a legally binding instrument.

It is the view of the Chair that the Nayarit Conference has shown that time has come to initiate a diplomatic process conducive to this goal. Our belief is that this process should comprise a specific timeframe, the definition of the most appropriate *fora*, and a clear and substantive framework, making the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons the essence of disarmament efforts.

It is time to take action. The 70th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks is the appropriate milestone to achieve our goal. Nayarit is a point of no return.

Nayarit, Mexico, 14 February 2014